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conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide; and (units)

(c) a fragment of (a) or (b), wherein the fragment has aminopeptidase activity;

wherein the polypeptide having aminopeptidase activity sequentially removes one amino acid residue at a time from the N-terminus of a peptide, polypeptide, or protein.

171. The polypeptide of claim 170, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 90% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

172. The polypeptide of claim 171, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 95% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

173. The polypeptide of claim 172, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 97% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

174. The polypeptide of claim 170, comprising the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment that has aminopeptidase activity. ✓

175. The polypeptide of claim 171, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

176. The polypeptide of claim 175, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

177. The polypeptide of claim 170, which is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under medium stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand, wherein medium stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide.

178. The polypeptide of claim 177, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

179. The polypeptide of claim 178, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

180. The polypeptide of claim 170, which is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under high stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand, wherein high stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 50% formamide.

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181. The polypeptide of claim 180, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

182. The polypeptide of claim 181, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

183. The polypeptide of claim 170, which is encoded by the nucleic acid sequence contained in plasmid pEJG18 which is contained in *E. coli* NRRL B-21677.

184. An isolated polypeptide having aminopeptidase activity with physicochemical properties of (a) a pH optimum in the range of from about pH 7.27 to about pH 10.95 determined at ambient temperature in the presence of Ala-para-nitroanilide; (b) a temperature stability of 90% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 60°C in the absence of substrate; (c) a temperature stability of 64% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 70°C in the absence of substrate; and (d) an ability to hydrolyze a substrate containing Ala, Arg, Asn, Asp, Cys, Gln, Glu, Gly, His, Ile, Leu, Lys, Phe, Pro, Ser, Thr, Trp, Tyr, or Val at its N-terminus.

Not a
Not a

no
structure

185. The polypeptide of claim 184, wherein the polypeptide has the ability to hydrolyze a substrate containing Ala, Glu, Gly, or Pro at its N-terminus.

186. The polypeptide of claim 184, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

187. The polypeptide of claim 186, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

188. A method for producing the polypeptide of claim 170 comprising (a) cultivating a strain to produce a supernatant comprising the polypeptide; and (b) recovering the polypeptide.

Specific
strain

189. A composition comprising the polypeptide of claim 170 and a suitable carrier.

190. The composition of claim 189, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 90% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

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191. The composition of claim 190, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 95% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

192. The composition of claim 191, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 97% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

193. The composition of claim 189, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment thereof that has aminopeptidase activity.

194. The composition of claim 190, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

195. The composition of claim 194, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

196. The composition of claim 189, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under medium stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1, or its complementary strand, wherein medium stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide.

197. The composition of claim 196, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

198. The composition of claim 197, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

199. The composition of claim 189, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under high stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1, or its complementary strand, wherein high stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 50% formamide.

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200. The composition of claim 199, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

201. The composition of claim 200, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

202. The composition of claim 190, wherein the polypeptide has physicochemical properties of (a) a pH optimum in the range of from about pH 7.27 to about pH 10.95 determined at ambient temperature in the presence of Ala-para-nitroanilide; (b) a temperature stability of 90% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 60°C in the absence of substrate; (c) a temperature stability of 64% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 70°C in the absence of substrate; and (d) an ability to hydrolyze a substrate containing Ala, Arg, Asn, Asp, Cys, Gln, Glu, Gly, His, Ile, Leu, Lys, Phe, Pro, Ser, Thr, Trp, Tyr, or Val at its N-terminus.

203. The composition of claim 202, wherein the polypeptide has the ability to hydrolyze a substrate containing Ala, Glu, Gly, or Pro at its N-terminus.

204. The composition of claim 202, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

205. The composition of claim 204, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

206. The composition of claim 190, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by the nucleic acid sequence contained in plasmid pEJG18 contained in *E. coli* NRRL B-21677.

REMARKS

Claims 130-169 have been canceled. New claims 170-206 have been added and are pending in the present application.

It is respectfully submitted that the present amendment presents no new issues or new matter and places this case in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.